

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET**SUBJECT:** (Optional)

Monthly Report -- Abidjan Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

2944

NO.**DATE**

May 1987

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)**DATE****RECEIVED****FORWARDED****OFFICER'S INITIALS****COMMENTS** (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

Chief, WSS

JMK

2.

Chief, Comm Ctr

KLM

3.

SA/CD

6/12

Ent

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Chief, MOD

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EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
ABIDJAN BUREAU

MAB 6035
1 June 87

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THRU: Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT: Monthly Report--Abidjan Bureau--May 1987

I. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. In a surprise announcement reported by AFP and BBC on the 28th, the Ivorian economy and finance minister, Abdoulaye Kone, told international creditors in Paris that Ivory Coast was no longer able to make its scheduled repayment of foreign debts. As of this date, these reports have not been confirmed in the Ivorian media but it is believed the economic problems stem from sharply lower prices of coffee and cocoa, Ivory Coast's major export earners. Ivory Coast has long been the most affluent of the West African nations and is considered by many to be one of the few real success stories in Africa of the Western style economic approach.

2. Chad warmly welcomed France's statement on 7 May that they would now provide "logistical and humanitarian" aid north of the 16th parallel, the former dividing line between French forces supporting President Habre and the GUNT insurgent forces in the north of Chad backed by Libya. To underline their commitment, French Cooperation Minister Aurillac visited northern Chad the latter part of the month. Former GUNT leader Goukouni Oueddei continued his West African travels and although he was in Burkina Faso on 4 May at the same time as current GUNT leader Acheikh ibn Oumar, no meeting was reported between the two. Other than a French soldier being wounded north of the 16th parallel while trying to clear a minefield, no significant fighting in Chad was reported this month.

3. Other political developments in May included Ghana reopening its border with Togo following last fall's abortive coup attempt in Togo, Nigerian and Ghanaian university unrest, antigovernment leaflets circulated in Guinea, and the traditional round of May Day speeches at the beginning of the month.

4. The clandestine Bardai Chadian National Radio was heard on 30 May for the first time since 29 April. The station, controlled by the Libyan-backed GUNT faction, apologized for the "break in transmission during Ramadan which was due to technical difficulties beyond our control."

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Freetown Domestic's 2000gmt cast also became monitorable (though poorly) after a prolonged period during which it could not be heard.

B. Communications

The BACH computer equipment received last month was brought on line this month and used in conjunction with the manual system until the commo section can be reconfigured to accomodate two terminals. Unfortunately, a software problem developed just after the bureau engineer went on R&R on the 23rd and the section is currently using only the manual system. The bureau technician is working on the problem and with the arrival of a TDY engineer in early June, we expect to have the automated system back on line soon.

C. Lateral Services

At the request of the DCM, 5-15 May the bureau provided videotapes of all three Ivorian television daily news casts. The effort was in support of a major trade fair sponsored by the Foreign Commercial Section of the Embassy, which consisted of industrial and commercial exhibits by 33 U.S. firms and organizations--reportedly a first to be held in West Africa. The event was given considerable local media attention.

D. Technical

1. The bureau's long-reliable microwave system went out for about a week at the beginning of the month during which time the bureau relied on the landline backup to relay traffic to the Embassy. After extensive troubleshooting the bureau engineer was able to "tweek" both ends of the system back into synch and restore normal operations. The engineer has requested spare mux cards, the suspected culprit, and will explore a possible line of sight problem.

2. One Victor monitor with power cords and outlet strips was received on 26 May.

II. ADMINISTRATION

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A. Personnel

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1. London Bureau senior associate editor [] arrived on 8 May for a 3-week TDY. [] filled in for editor [] who was on R&R 8 May-1 June.

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2. Bureau engineer [] departed for CONUS R&R on 22 May. His wife [] the bureau's financial/administrative assistant departed on the same day after submitting her resignation. Vivian's replacement, [] wife of an Embassy communicator, EOD'd on 17 May.

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3. Effective 10 May, the bureau's four Embassy Employee Association support personnel were converted to personal services contracts. The conversion was made in compliance with a State Department directive to phase out all employee association contracts. Bureau operations and budget will not be affected by the change.

4. Senior monitor [redacted] became acting shift supervisor for a 3-month period beginning 24 May.

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5. Acting chief monitor [redacted] and electronic technician [redacted] received PSI's during the month.

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6. Bureau drivers [redacted] received safe driving awards this month for driving accident-free in 1986--no small accomplishment in Abidjan.

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III. VISITS

1. The organization admin support officer assigned to Monrovia visited the bureau on 20 May to brief staff employees on the new retirement options. He left copies of the software program to compare the various retirement plans for the staff's use.

2. On 4 May, Embassy RMO Ferguson Reid briefed all bureau employees on the State Department's AIDS Testing Program and the disease in general.

IV. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The bureau chief made her Abidjan stage debut in an Embassy-sponsored production of Woody Allen's "Don't Drink the Water" performed on the PAO's back lawn by the Abidjan Players. The play closed to rave reviews in the embassy newspaper "Drumbeat" by world renowned theater critic and international gadabout, Gilda Gush, who interrupted her tour of the London and Paris avant-garde theatre scene to attend the gala opening (and closing) of the play in the "Paris of West Africa." Nevermind that it was a little difficult for the bureau chief to get motivated for this particular role (she played a foreign service officer), it was clear that she's destined for stardom.

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[redacted]
Bureau Chief, Abidjan Bureau

Attachments:

Monthly Production Report

cc: Chief, Swaziland Bureau
Deputy Chief, London Bureau